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INTELLIGENCE IN A CHANGING WORLD

I would like to talk about the important degree of change that is taking place in the United States Intelligence Community today. Change that is reaching into every element of intelligence activities. Change which I believe is beneficial. Change, however, which comes not just from conviction within but from the influence of three important external factors. The first of these is the changing perception of the country itself as to our role in international affairs. The second is the burgeoning increase in technical intelligence collection capabilities today. The third, closely related to you and your profession, is the much greater interest and concern of the American public in intelligence activities today than just a few years ago. Let me touch on each of these factors for change and then take your questions.

First, the changing perception of America's role in the world. I believe we are in a state of transition, a transition from a very activist, interventionist outlook toward international affairs to one in which we are recognizing more readily the limitations, the realities upon our ability to influence events in other countries. This is not to say that we are retrenching towards any degree of isolationism. In fact, I believe as a nation we are gradually emerging from our post-Vietnam aversion to any semblance of intervention on the international scene and entering an era when our outlook toward the world and our role in it is more realistic and more reasonable. The circumstances today however are such that we must gauge more carefully than ever before what our role in the world can be and should be.

Take for instance the difficulty we have today in just deciding whom we are for and whom we are against. Traditionally we have always been in favor of those whom the Soviets were against. Some of our choices today are not that simple. If you look just at 1978, there were a number of instances in which there were two Communist countries fighting each other. In some of those instances it was very clear that it was not wise for us to be in favor of either one or the other, even though the Soviets were supporting one of those parties.

Today it is not so clear that it is necessary for the United States to take sides in every international altercation, even if the Soviets are attempting to gain advantage from it. The consequences of a nation's succumbing to Communist influence are not as irreversible as we perhaps once thought. Indonesia, Sudan, Egypt, Somalia all were under considerable Communist influence at one time or another and have come back to be

independent. So today there is in our body politic a legitimate question as to whether it is always necessary to come to the rescue of countries being subjected to Communist pressure.

And even when we do decide that some struggling nation deserves our support, there are problems today in giving it that did not exist just a few years ago. One of these, again closely related to you and your work, is the revolution in international communications. Any action that we take on the international scene today is almost instantly transmitted around the globe; instantly analyzed; and instantly judged. Today that international public judgment, be it approbation or criticism, does influence events, and does inhibit the actions of major powers like the United States and the Soviet Union, even though those countries who pass judgment are very generally second or third level powers.

There are other difficulties today that we didn't face 10 or 20 years ago if we attempt to influence other countries through diplomacy or through international organizations. In the past most free nations took their cue on the international scene from us. Today in such fora as the United Nations, each country usually uses its one vote independently of what the major powers may desire and, in fact, frequently the major powers find themselves on the minority side of those votes.

If then out of frustration with diplomacy we should decide in the future to intervene militarily, we have to recall our lessons of Vietnam and recognize that when the pendulum of offense and defense in military weaponry tends, as it does today, toward the defense, even a minor military power can give a major power a very difficult time.

What all this adds up to is not that we are impotent on the world scene but that the leverage of our influence, while still considerable, must be exercised much more subtly than ever before. We must be concerned with long-term influences rather than just putting fingers in the dike. We must be able to anticipate rather than just react to events. We must be able to interpret the underlying courses which can be influenced and driven over time. Now for us in the intelligence world this means that we must vastly expand the scope of our endeavor.

Thirty years ago our primary concern was to keep tabs on Soviet military development. Today the threat to our national well-being comes not just from actions of the Soviet Union, nor is it restricted to purely military concerns. Thus the subject matter with which we in intelligence must be intimately familiar, while it certainly continues to have a high military content, has broadened to include politics, economics, energy, population, terrorism, the health and psychiatry of international leaders, narcotics and so on. There is hardly an academic discipline, there is hardly an area of the world about which we do not need to be intimately informed to keep our foreign policymakers well advised. Hence, this is a demanding time for our intelligence organizations, a time of fundamental change in the subject matter with which we deal.

Looking quickly to a second element of change, the technological revolution which affects how we collect intelligence, let me start by pointing out there are three ways of gaining information about other

countries, in a very general sense at least. By photographs from satellites and airplanes, by intercepting signals such as those that could be passing through this room right now, either from military activities or communications systems, and by the traditional human agent, the spy.

In our business the first two, photographic and signals intelligence, are what we call technical intelligence as opposed to the human means. Our capabilities in the technical area, thanks to the great sophistication of our industries, are burgeoning. Interestingly though, rather than denigrating the value of the traditional spy, technical capabilities have increased his importance. Broadly speaking, technical intelligence tells you something that happened sometime in the past. But that often raises more questions than it answers. Why did it happen? What is going to happen next? Uncovering the concerns of other nations, the pressures which influence their decisions and their intentions is exactly the forte of the human intelligence activity. And it is indispensable that we have that capability if we are going to anticipate the future trends as I have been suggesting.

The real challenge in intelligence collection then is to be able to put all of our efforts together, the photographic, the signals, and the human, orchestrating them so that they complement each other and so that we can learn what we need to learn in the least expensive and the least risky manner. What questions a photograph cannot answer you try to solve with signals or human activity. For instance, the plans which may be hinted at in a conversation you try to confirm with a photograph, or if you have a photograph of some new factory in a foreign country and you wonder whether it is making nuclear weapons, you specifically target a human agent to try to find that information.

All this may sound very logical, very simple to you. But because our technical capabilities are growing rapidly and because intelligence in our country is a large bureaucracy spread over a number of different departments and agencies each with its own priorities and concerns, we can no longer do business in the traditional manner. It has taken some fundamental restructuring to accommodate these changes.

The Director of Central Intelligence has been authorized to coordinate the national intelligence activities of our country ever since the passage of the National Security Act of 1947. However, until recently he had inadequate authority to do so. Just over a year ago, President Carter signed a new Executive Order which strengthened the authority of the Director over budgets and over the collection activities of all national intelligence organizations. The change is still evolving today. It is going well but is making a substantial difference in the management of intelligence.

Finally, let me hit the third topic which is driving change. That is the increased public attention since the investigations of 1974 to 1976. These investigations brought to American intelligence more public attention than ever in the history of mankind has been brought to bear on a major intelligence activity. The impact of all this added visibility has been substantial, and in some respects it has been traumatic. The

right kind of visibility can be beneficial both to us and to the public. By the right kind of visibility, I mean the public's access to information which permits you to understand at least generically what we are doing and why we are doing it, and which confirms that the proper controls established over the intelligence apparatus are in fact effective. To achieve this we are trying today to be more open about the things we do. We are passing more of what we do directly to you in the form of unclassified analyses which we distribute to the public. We are answering questions more. We are speaking more in public as I am with you this morning and we are participating more in symposia and academic conferences. I know that the Intelligence Community of our country is doing an honorable and a vital job for our country and for the free world. It is doing it well and I personally want you to know as much about it as possible. And parenthetically I would mention, because you are an Overseas Writers organization, that I believe this trend towards greater openness, greater visibility in intelligence is not unique in our country but it is a process that is taking hold in other free democratic societies.

Let me add though that some of the visibility that we receive is definitely unwanted. Unwanted because it benefits neither Americans, nor friends, nor allies. Here, of course, I am talking primarily about unauthorized disclosures of properly classified information. Our need for some level of secrecy appears to run contradictory to your imperative to keep the American public informed. But let me suggest that we do meet on some common ground despite this contradiction. To begin with I am emphasizing our need for secrecy primarily because of our need to protect our sources. I hardly need to elaborate on that topic in front of a profession who has had members go to jail to protect their sources. Let me add though that we also need to protect some information that does not reveal sources. This is primarily information which, if it is held uniquely by our decisionmakers, will be of special value to our country. Again, however, this is not something unknown to you because it is nothing more than an exclusive. You have spent a lot of your efforts and time in protecting your own exclusives. So we do have common ground. We can understand each others motives and purposes.

On our side we are trying more to understand your imperative of informing the public by our effort to be more open and more responsive. Let me suggest on your side that I would not think of asking you to be less perservering or to cover up or to ignore our faults. But I would question whether sometimes members of the media today are not overly eager to resurrect old, well-worn stories about the Central Intelligence Agency and then play them as though they just happened yesterday, until you get to the penultimate paragraph when it says 1953. I would also question whether some of the media always apply the same standards of truth and confirmation to leaks of intelligence information as they do to other stories. Let me suggest to you that in my experience, a large percentage of those who offer these leaks are people who have selfish, not altruistic motives, people who are out to use the American media and through them the American public.

Finally, let me also suggest that there are times when the media should recognize that it might not be in the interest of the free world

to publish something, especially security information which you may receive. For instance, the names of our agents. I do not accept the excuse which is often made that you must publish it because if you do not, Joe or Bill or Mary will; or, because if you have come into possession of it the KGB certainly must also have it. Yet while I make these somewhat critical comments let me end by acknowledging how difficult the choices are that you have to make in these areas. I recognize that fully. They are difficult judgment calls, each one unique to itself. I only suggest some balance here is very necessary to our welfare.

Let me though add that the net impact of all this visibility I have been mentioning is, in my view, a net plus for the United States and for its Intelligence Community. We must have public support. We must avoid the abuses of the past. And yet there are definite minuses to this visibility too. There are inhibitions on the actions that we could take, on the risks that we will take. The issue before our country today is really: how much assurance does this nation need against invasions of privacy and against the possible taking of foreign policy steps that would be considered unethical; and how do we balance these desires for privacy and propriety with a resulting reduction in our intelligence capabilities and covert action potential.

Congress is expected to give expression to this question of balance in the enactment of legislation called Charters for the Intelligence Community. Such legislation would set out our authorities as well as the parameters within which we are permitted to work. It is my sincere hope that such legislation will be passed by this Congress--written with care, with sensitivity to problems like those I have been discussing with you, it can help to resolve some of these difficulties. Overreaction either by tying the Intelligence Community's hands or by not imposing any restrictions whatsoever would be a mistake--on the one hand inviting a repetition of abuses, on the other hand emasculating necessary intelligence capabilities.

After all these comments, plus and minus, let me end with an assurance that in my view the intelligence arm of the United States Government today is strong and capable. It is undergoing substantial change. That is never an easy or a placid process in a large bureaucracy. Out of this present metamorphosis is emerging an Intelligence Community in which the legal rights of our citizens and the constraints and the controls on intelligence activities are going to be balanced with a need to garner necessary information for the conduct of foreign policy. This is not an easy transition. We are not there yet but we are moving rapidly and surely in the right direction. When we reach our goal we will have constructed a new model of intelligence, a uniquely American model of intelligence reflecting the laws and the ideals of our country, and one which I believe will be a precursor to similar changes in countries all over the free world. Thank you very much, let me have your questions.

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